In the wake of two catastrophic Annihilation events, the Universe is in a fragile and weakened state. With the fabric of space itself damaged, anomalous fissures are beginning to appear, fissures that could crack and spread, collapsing reality and letting in things that should not exist in our dimension.

Guided by the mystical insight of the newly returned Adam Warlock, the gunslinging Star-Lord has forged a proactive team of proven cosmic champions ready to protect the vulnerable universe and prevent any large-scale disasters from ever happening again. Together, Star-Lord, Warlock, Martyr, Gamora, Drax, Mantis, Groot and Rocket Raccoon are the...

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

The War of Kings—a massive conflict between the Shi'ar Imperium and the Kree Stellar Empire—rages on. This spurred the Guardians to undertake two desperate missions in hopes of bringing about an end to hostilities before the conflagration engulfed the galaxy.

Both efforts have failed. Phyla-Vell, now calling herself Martyr, provoked the Inhumans by taking their princess Crystal hostage. Adam Warlock's confrontation with Emperor Vulcan led to Warlock being marked for death and hunted down by the Shi'ar. Meanwhile, Rocket Raccoon, Major Victory, Drax and Groot have gone missing in action.

And as they attempted to regroup at their headquarters on Knowhere, the combined factions of the Guardians found themselves caught between the Shi'ar Imperial Guard, and the New Inhuman Elite, led by King Black Bolt himself. All hell has broken loose.

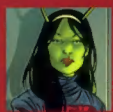
STAR-LORD (PETER QUILL)

ADAM WARLOCK

MARTYR (PHYLA-VELL)

GAMORA

DRAX



MANTIS

ROCKET RACCOON

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"...AND THAT WAS ONLY HALF OF OUR PROBLEMS."
STOP! WAIT!
ELITE! SECURE THE PERSON OF PRINCESS CRYSTAL AND PUT DOWN ANYONE WHO OPPOSES US!
OKAY, SOMEHOW WE'VE JUST TAKEN DELIVERY OF A COMPACT, ONE-ROOM EDITION OF THE SHI'AR-INHUMAN WAR!
IT IS THE ENEMY KING IN PERSON! IMPERIAL GUARD, ATTACK!
HALT! SIT! STAY!

WHAT THE [illegible] IS THE MATTER WITH YOU, PHYLA?
YOU DON'T TAKE BLACK BOLT'S COUSIN CRYSTAL HOSTAGE UNLESS YOU WANT TO GET A REAL TALKING-TO!
LET HER GO!
ARE YOU FOR REAL? THIS HOTTIE IS OUR HAIL MARY PASS!
SHI'AR FORCES! YOU TRANSGRESS NEUTRALITY OF KNOWHERE STATION!
STEP BACK OR BREAK TEETH ON COSMO'S TK WALL!

KNOWHERE RUN

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I ALLOWED YOU TO TAKE ME, YOU VIOLENT LITTLE GIRL! I'M TRYING TO HELP YOU!
OWWW!
COULD YOU KICK HER TOO WHILE SHE'S DOWN THERE?
JUST TELL ME ABOUT THIS WARNING YOU WERE TRYING TO DELIVER TO THE THRONE OF ATTILAN!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE THAT SPACE ITSELF IS THREATENED BY THE VIOLENCE OF THIS WAR?
BECAUSE I'VE SEEN IT, LADY! I'VE SEEN SPACE RIP OPEN!
MANTIS! SHOW THE NICE LADY SOME OF THE FISSURES WE'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH!
YES, PETER!
OH! GREAT RANDAC! I SEE SUCH TERRIBLE DESTRUCTION!
THIS WAR IS A DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN.
COME ON! SHE'S OUR PRISONER! SHE'S OUR BARGAINING CHIP!
SORRY ABOUT HER. SHE'S NEW.
SO WHAT WILL MAKE UP FOR THAT? FLOWERS? A CARD?
SORRY WON'T BE ENOUGH, SIR. YOU HAVE INSULTED AND ANGERED THE INHUMAN ROYAL FAMILY.
COMRADE STAR-LORD, THIS IS COSMO! WHATEVER YOU ARE DOINK, DO IT FASTER!
THE SHI'AR HAVE TELEPATH OF THEIR OWN!

YOUR HIGHNESS! YOUR HIGHNESS, THERE'S NO NEED FOR--
YEOOWWCH!
BLACK BOLT! MY LORD, LISTEN!
THEY HAVEN'T HARMED ME!
WE REALLY HAVEN'T! NO ONE LIKES HARMING! HARMING IS BAD!
TELL HIM!
WE MUST UNITE WITH THE GUARDIANS AGAINST OUR COMMON FOE! WE MUST LISTEN TO THEIR WA--
GRUUUHHHH!
RENEGADE TELEPATH IS INCAPACITATED.
ADVANCE!
MMMRHH..?
ARE YOU GOD?
FOR THE GLORY OF THE MAJESTOR, TAKE DOWN THE ENEMY KING!

MY LORD, TOGETHER WE COULD--
OW!
EARGHH!
NYAAAHH!
BEWARE! I AM DETECTING ELEVATED LEVELS OF--
BLACK BOLT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
THIS BATTLE IS NOT OVER!
YOU WERE ALL WE CAME FOR, CRYSTAL.
WE WILL NOT EXPOSE THE KING UNNECESSARILY TO SHI'AR FORCES.
LOCKJAW...
YEOW!
KRA-KOOM

FZZZM
...RETURN US TO ATTILAN! NOW!
THE INHUMAN FORCES HAVE FLED, MENTOR!
MOST UNFORTUNATE!
STRIKE FORCE! REVERT TO ORIGINAL MISSION PARAMETERS! SEIZE THIS STATION AND BRING ME THE HEAD OF THE INSURGENT KNOWN AS WARLOCK!
DEBRIEF LOG: STAR-LORD
SO THE INHUMANS BUGGED OUT AND LEFT US TO FACE THE MUSIC.
I DUNNO. I WAS RAISED TO BELIEVE IN OLD SCHOOL, KARMIC WISDOM.
YOU KNOW, LIKE "NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF STRANGE BEDFELLOWS" AND "THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND."
AND "JUST BECAUSE AN AD HOC BUT CHARISMATICALLY LED TEAM OF INTERGALACTIC HEROES MAKES A BAD FIRST IMPRESSION, YOU DON'T DITCH THEM AND LEAVE THEM TO FACE A FULL-SCALE, MAXIMUM PREJUDICE SHI'AR ASSAULT."
STUFF LIKE THAT.
THE SHI'AR WERE ALL OVER US LIKE A BODY BAG. IMPERIAL GUARD AND METAL WING CADRE BATTLE TROOPERS.
I HAD TO COME UP WITH A PLAN TO STOP THEIR INVASION OF KNOWHERE FAST....
"SCATTER"? THAT'S YOUR PLAN? "SCATTER"?
YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH IT?
HEY, AS AN ALTERNATIVE [TIK!] TO "GET SHOT AN UNHEALTHY NUMBER OF TIMES," IT'S GOLDEN!
MY MIND CANNOT FIND ADAM, GAMORA, PHYLA OR MOONDRAGON.
THEY ALL SCATTER IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION.
COSMO CANNOT REACH THEM EITHER. THAT NASTY IMPERIAL GUARD TEEPER ORACLE IS STILL BLOCKINK US!

LET'S HOPE COMS WORK, THEN, BECAUSE "SCATTER" WAS ONLY HALF OF MY PLAN!
DELEGATE GORANI! COUNCIL DELEGATE GORANI. THIS IS STAR-LORD!
KNOWHERE IS UNDER ASSAULT BY SHI'AR FORCES! REQUEST YOU MOBILIZE STATION SECURITY AND ALERT THE LUMINALS!
WE NEED A UNITED FRONT HERE!
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KNOWHERE.
KNOWHERE IS A NEUTRAL FACILITY, QUILL. WE WILL NOT ENGAGE THE SHI'AR.
ALL SPECIES DELEGATIONS HAVE WITHDRAWN INTO SHELTER.
GIVE YOURSELVES UP TO THESE ENEMIES YOU HAVE BROUGHT HERE. THEN THEY WILL LEAVE KNOWHERE ALONE.
GET REAL! THE SHI'AR AIM TO ANNEX THE WHOLE PLACE! AT LEAST GET THE LUMINALS OUT HERE!
NOT AN OPTION. XARTH HAS A NON-AGGRESSION PACT WITH THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM..
YOU HAVE BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF, QUILL. YOU WILL FACE IT ALONE. GORANI OUT.
GORANI? GORANI, YOU SON OF A SCHLAG!
GUYS? IT TURNS OUT "SCATTER" IS ALL I'VE GOT!
THE CONTINUUM CORTEX.
REPORT, HUSSAR.
WARLOCK AND HIS CONFEDERATES HAVE FLED INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE STATION. OUR FORCES ARE SEARCHING THE FACILITY BY SECTION.
WE WILL FIND THEM AND ELIMINATE THEM AS THE EMPEROR ORDERED.
WARLOCK WILL BE THE EASIEST TO LOCATE. THE WITCH-MARK MAGIQUE PLACED ON HIM IS INDELIBLE.
IT LED US HERE TO KNOWHERE. IT WILL LEAD US TO HIM. LIKE AN ISOTOPE MARKER, NO MATTER WHERE HE HIDES.
THIS FACILITY IS OF CONSIDERABLE SIZE AND COMPLEXITY. I INTEND TO SEIZE IT AS A WAY STATION FOR THE IMPERIUM.

WE WILL NEED REINFORCEMENTS TO PROPERLY SECURE THE STATION.
VOYAGER MUST OPEN A PORTAL AND BRING ANOTHER REGIMENT THROUGH FROM THE AERIE.
VOYAGER HAS EXHAUSTED HIS TALENT FOR NOW. HE REQUIRES RECOVERY TIME.
THIS SYSTEM, HOWEVER, IS A SOPHISTICATED DISPLACEMENT DEVICE.
NOT ONLY CAN I EMPLOY IT TO BRING REINFORCEMENTS...
...I CAN ALSO USE IT TO DEPLOY SHI'AR STRIKE FORCES ANYWHERE IN TIME AND SPACE.
OUR TRANSMAT RANGE WILL EXCEED EVEN THAT OF THE INHUMAN TELEPORT CADRES. NO TARGET-WORLD WILL BE BEYOND THE IMPERIUM'S REACH.
THE EMPEROR WILL GARLAND YOU FOR DELIVERING THIS PRIZE TO HIM, MENTOR. I--
ONE MOMENT.
MENTOR, OUR FORCES HAVE ENGAGED TWO OF THE FUGITIVES IN THE SUB-LEVELS.
SUBLEVEL NINE.
MORE OF THEM! EVERY DAS'T WAY WE TURN!
I THINK OUR BEST BET IS TO HACK THROUGH THESE IDIOTS AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE CENTRAL VENT SYSTEM!
IT'S A BETTER PLAN THAN "SCATTER." HEATHER, WE--
HEY! WHERE'S HEATHER?
DON'T ASK ME.

JUST A LITTLE ONE.
SHARRA AND K'YTHRI!
SERGEANT! HE'S HERE! OPEN FIRE!
NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT ARE YO--
ZZBB
ZZZKK
CHMMM
CHOOMMM
KTOOM
WAIT! IT'S GUARDSMAN MAGIQUE!
BY THE SUNS, HOW COULD WE HAVE HIT HER?
THE WITCH-MARK! IT'S ON HER BODY!

THE CONTINUUM CORTEX.
THESE CONTROLS ARE SIMPLICITY ITSELF.
STAND BY WHILE I BRING THE FIRST DETACHMENT THROUGH.
WAIT...
THIS DISPLAY SUGGESTS THE CORTEX DEVICE HAS RECENTLY BEEN USED.
IT HAS! AND GUESS WHAT ELSE?
YOU'RE SURROUNDED!
YAAGHH!

THIS IS MENTOR! ALARM! ALARM!
WE NEED BACKUP NOW!
AHH, SHUDDUP!
KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
THE ODDS LOOK TIGHT. DO YOU THINK WE CAN TAKE THEM ALL?
I AM GROOT!
MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY.

AND THE BAD NEWS DOESN'T STOP THERE.
SUPPRESSING FIRE! NOW!
VOYAGER! GET THAT PORTAL OPEN! FALL BACK!
LILANDRA? HA, YOU FOOL! I RECEIVE INTELFEED.
THE USURPER LILANDRA NERAMANI WAS ASSASSINATED IN THE FIRST FEW MINUTES OF HER PATHETIC COUP!
WHAT? WHAT? NO!
UGH-NNN!
GET OFF ME, LESSER FORM!
YOU WILL BE CRUSHED! EXTERMINATED!
I SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF EMPEROR VULCAN!
VULCAN? NEWSFLASH, BRAINIAC!
ABOUT THREE HOURS AGO, ME AND MY PALS, AND SOME FRIENDS CALLED THE STARJAMMERS, DELIVERED MAJESTRIX LILANDRA TO CHANDILAR!
YOUR BOSS IS OUT OF A JOB! THE TRUE EMPRESS IS BACK ON THE THRONE!
VOYAGER! EXIT PORTALS! NOW!
HURRY! ALL UNITS WITHDRAW!
SHE'S...SHE'S DEAD?

DEBRIEF LOG: GAMORA (ZEN-WHOBERIAN, ENHANCED BIOLOGY, ADVANCED COMBAT SKILLS)
WE DROVE THE SHI'AR SCUM OUT, THEN CODED A TELEPORT SHIELD TO BLOCK THEM FROM RETURNING.
IT FELT GOOD TO WIN A FIGHT. WE DON'T SEEM TO MANAGE THAT MUCH.
I DON'T KNOW WHY WE WEREN'T CELEBRATING.
DEBRIEF LOG: ROCKET RACCOON (EVOLVED MAMMAL, TACTICAL AND DEMOLITIONS EXPERTISE)
DEAD. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. AFTER EVERYTHING WE DID.
I REALLY THOUGHT WE HAD MANAGED TO DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD STOP THIS WAR IN ITS TRACKS.
*****!
NOW SHE'S GONE AND EVERYTHING'S TEN TIMES WORSE THAN BEFORE.
DEBRIEF LOG: ADAM WARLOCK (COSMIC BEING, ENHANCED BIOLOGY, METAPHYSICAL ENERGY MANIPULATION)
THE NEWS REGARDING LILANDRA NERAMANI WAS GRAVE ENOUGH.
SHE WAS OUR BEST HOPE OF STOPPING THIS CONFLICT FROM TEARING THE GALAXY APART.
ON TOP OF THAT, WE COULD FIND NO TRACE OF PETER, MANTIS, BUG, MR. FLAG OR COSMO.
THEN PHYLA LOCATED MOONDRAGON...
GUARDIANS CONTROL CENTER.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MISS? HOW DID STARHAWK GET INTO YOUR MIND?
I DON'T KNOW. IT'S LIKE MY MIND IS TOO NEW. IT'S NOT... TOUGHENED YET. I COULDN'T SHUT HER OUT.
AND YOU THINK SHE DID SOMETHING TO PETER AND THE OTHERS?
I DON'T LIKE IT. IF ONLY WE KNEW MORE ABOUT STARHAWK. IF ONLY I COULD REMEMBER M--
GGROOKKKK
JEEZ. WHAT THE FLARK WAS THAT?
IT CAME FROM THE STATION SUPERSTRUCTURE. IT--
OH!
CAN'T YOU FEEL THAT? ANY OF YOU? CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?

"KNOWHERE JUST CAME BACK TO LIFE!"
ADAM WARLOCK! HEAR ME!
THERE IS LITTLE TIME!
THE FATE OF ALL EXISTENCE DEPENDS UPON YOU!
NEXT: BACK TO...THE FUTURE?